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- 5 monitoring said communication medium for signals received from a location associated with said first party after said step of initiating a call;
- detecting an initial audible signal received from the first party location via said communication medium;
- initiating processing of said initial audible signal in a call classifier to determine a characteristic of said audible signal; and
- 10 [playing a prerecorded greeting over said communication medium during said call, said prerecorded greeting being played during a time period when said call classifier is processing said initial audible signal.
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3. (Amended) The method claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said step of initiating processing includes initiating processing that will analyze whether said initial audible signal was generated by a live party during the call.

4. (Amended) The method claimed in claim 3, further comprising the step of:

when said call classifier determines that said initial audible signal was generated by a live party at the first party location, establishing a talk path between the live party and an agent at the call center after playback of said prerecorded greeting has ended.

5. (Amended) The method claimed in claim 3, further comprising the step of:

92 when said call classifier determines that said initial audible signal was not generated by a live party at the first party location, terminating the call.

8. (Amended) A method for use in managing an outgoing call comprising the steps of:

65 placing an outgoing call to a remote party location over a communication network;

sub-B2 } processing a signal received from said remote party location during said call to
5 determine a source type of said signal;

playing a prerecorded greeting to said remote party location during said step of processing, wherein said step of playing a prerecorded message includes detecting a period of silence after receipt of said signal and initiating playback of said prerecorded greeting in response thereto; and

10 after said prerecorded greeting has ended, establishing a talk path between a local agent and the remote party location when it is determined that said signal is a voice signal that was generated by a live party during the call.

sub-B2 } 15. (Amended) A system for use within a call center, comprising:

92 } a call processing unit operable to place a call to a remote party location via a communication network;

5 a call classifier unit operable to determine when said call is answered, detect an audible signal from the remote party location, and analyze a first detected signal received

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from said remote party location to determine whether said first detected signal originated from a live party during the call;

a message playback unit operable to play back a prerecorded message to said remote party location while said call classifier unit is analyzing said first detected signal; and

10 a switch unit operable to establish a talk path between a local agent position and said remote party location when it is determined by said call classifier unit that said first detected signal originated from a live party during the call.

19. (Amended) The system claimed in claim 15, wherein:

95 said call processing unit includes means for terminating said call when it is determined by said call classifier unit that said first detected signal did not originate from a live party during the call.

22. (Amended) The system claimed in claim 15, wherein:

96 said call classifier unit is part of a pool of call classifier units; and

said call processing unit is operable to assign call classifier units from said pool of call classifier units to individual calls being supported by the call center.

Please add the following new Claims 23-25:

23. (New) The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the initial audible signal is the first signal detected after said call is answered.